

Weekly Newscast Lesson Plan



Learning English with CBC is a joint project with
CBC Calgary, CBC Edmonton and the Government of Alberta



Calgary

February 6, 2017

Objectives:

- To develop listening skills
- To increase vocabulary
- To increase knowledge of current events
- To provide an authentic learning resource

Contents:

- Three news stories
- Vocabulary building activities
- Listening comprehension activities
- Transcripts
- Answer keys

News story #1 Six people dead in Quebec mosque shooting (0:11)

Setting the Scene



The victims of the shooting were Azzedine Soufiane (*top left*), Mamadou Tanou Barry (*top middle*), Khaled Belkacemi (*top right*), Aboubaker Thabti (*bottom left*), Ibrahima Barry (*bottom middle*), and Abdelkrim Hassane (*bottom right*). (CBC file photo)

Canadians were shocked and saddened by a violent attack in Quebec City. On Sunday, January 29th, a young man with a gun entered a mosque (a Muslim religious building) during evening prayers. He shot and killed six people. Nineteen other people were injured. The victims all had families, and many were fathers to young children. They include a pharmacy worker, a grocer and businessman, a scientist and professor at Université Laval, an information technology specialist, and workers for the government of Quebec. During the past week, Canadians in Quebec and around the country have mourned these deaths with public events and ceremonies.

Pre-listening Questions

How did you feel when you heard this news story?

Did people in your community acknowledge this sad event? What did people do?

When a tragic event happens, where do you get information about it? From the internet? From radio? From friends? Or another source?

Vocabulary

Matching

To help you better understand the words in the news story, match the words with their definitions.
Answers are in the appendix.

| <u>Answer</u> | <u>Vocabulary word</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|---------------|-------------------------|---|
| _____ | mourn (v.) | a) person who might have committed a crime |
| _____ | wounded (adj.) | b) the acts of walking through an area to make sure it's safe |
| _____ | prayers (n.) | c) to search for the truth |
| _____ | suspect (n.) | d) a ceremony to honour a dead person |
| _____ | charges (n.) | e) to feel strong sadness when someone dies |
| _____ | investigate (v.) | f) became larger in size or amount |
| _____ | motive (n.) | g) a religious practice of speaking to God |
| _____ | funeral (n.) | h) people affected by a crime |
| _____ | victims (n.) | i) injured by a weapon |
| _____ | increased (v.) | j) a reason for doing something |
| _____ | patrols (n.) | k) a police statement saying someone has committed crimes |

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

opened fire – began shooting a gun

first-degree murder – a killing that was planned

burials – ceremonies where dead people are put in graves

places of worship – religious buildings

national terror threat – the chance of a terror attack, according to authorities

We encourage you to study these new words using this link: <https://quizlet.com/32ukdv>

You can practice online for free and as many times as you want to. The Quizlet app is a free vocabulary study tool. You can download it to your phone or tablet and practice new vocabulary whenever you have time.

Listening Task

Chronological order

Look at the sentences below that describe events in the story. Listen to the story. Number the sentences in the correct order that they happened in time, not the order they appear in the story. You may have to listen to the story more than once.

- a. _____ Police in Quebec continue to investigate, and police around Canada do more patrols.
- b. _____ A man, Alexandre Bissonnette, opened fire inside the mosque.
- c. _____ Thousands of people attended a public funeral in Montreal.
- d. _____ Six people died, and 18 others were wounded.
- e. _____ In a Quebec City mosque, people practiced evening prayers.
- f. _____ The national terror threat was set at medium because of the attack on Parliament Hill.

Food for Thought

How can Canadians support the families and communities that were affected?

How is the government handling this incident? What can they do to help Canadians feel safe?

The shooter was a young student. Why do you think a person would commit an act like this?

How can these incidents be prevented in the future?

News story #2 Trudeau will no longer change electoral system (1:41)

Setting the Scene



(Chris Youn/Canadian Press) (CBC file photo)

In December of 2016, the Canadian government ran a survey on a website called MyDemocracy.ca. The website asked questions about what people thought of democracy, how it should be practiced in Canada, and how Parliament should function. Nearly 400,000 people completed the survey. On February 1st, Minister of Democratic Institutions Karina Gould announced that the federal government will not be changing Canada's electoral system. According to Gould, the survey suggested that Canadians have mixed feelings about reform. Members of Parliament from other parties have criticized this decision. They say the survey questions were too vague, and therefore could not produce clear answers on the issue.

Pre-listening Questions

Did you hear about the MyDemocracy.ca survey? Did you take the survey?

What do you think about elections in Canada? Are they different from your home country?

Do you think a survey is a good way to learn about other people's opinions? What are some other options?

Vocabulary

Sentence Completion

Learning some of the new words you will hear in the listening will help you understand the news story. Use the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| election (n.) | choosing a leader through voting |
| reform (n.) | the process of improving something by fixing problems |
| campaign (n.) | a political race with the goal of winning an election |
| repeated (v.) | said more than once |
| instructions (n.) | a statement or order about what to do and/or how to do it |
| preference (n.) | wanting one option more than another |
| agreement (n.) | a situation where people have the same opinion |
| criticize (v.) | to say why something is not good |

1. The journalist asked the question twice. After she _____ it, the mayor gave an answer.
2. Jack likes the Conservative candidate, and Drew's _____ is the Liberal one. But, both are in _____ that the economy is the most important issue.
3. Mr. Smith talked a lot about education in his _____ to become premier of the province. He thinks that education _____ is needed.
4. When he ran for president, Donald Trump would _____ groups of people, including Mexicans. Many people were surprised when he won the _____.
5. To apply for that job, go to the government website and follow the _____.

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

throne speech – a speech made by the Governor General which outlines government plans

“first past the post” – a voting system in which the candidate that wins has the highest number of votes – not necessarily the majority (more than 50%) of the votes

opposition parties – the political parties of a province or country that are not in government

We encourage you to study these new words using this link: <https://quizlet.com/32ukq5>

You can practice online for free and as many times as you want to. The Quizlet app is a free vocabulary study tool. You can download it to your phone or tablet and practice new vocabulary whenever you have time.

Listening Activity

Answering True/False questions

Read the following statements. While you listen to the story, decide whether the statements are **true** or **false**. Write your answer in the blanks.

Answers are in the appendix.

1. ___ Trudeau's government is now looking to change the way Canadians vote.
2. ___ Electoral reform was one of Trudeau's most important campaign promises.
3. ___ Trudeau talked about electoral reform in a throne speech.
4. ___ He said the 2016 election would be the last under the old system.
5. ___ Canadians want to change to a "first past the post" system.
6. ___ The new Minister of Democratic Institutions will not change the electoral system.
7. ___ The Prime Minister said that he didn't talk to enough Canadians about it.
8. ___ He said Canadians have a clear preference on a new voting system.
9. ___ Opposition parties criticized Trudeau's decision.
10. ___ The Conservatives called Trudeau a liar.

Food for thought

Do you think the "first past the post" system is a good one? Why or why not?

Can you remember any other campaign promises that Prime Minister Trudeau made?

Do you think politicians need to follow all of their campaign promises? Or do you think situations can change?

News story #3 Calgary police officer resigns due to harassment (2:58)

Setting the Scene



Former Calgary police officer Jen Magnus at her resignation (Dave Gilson/CBC) (CBC file photos)

On January 31st, at a Calgary Police Commission meeting, officer Jen Magnus resigned from her job. She stated that she had suffered in her 14-year career because of harassment and unfair practices. This is not the first time that the Calgary Police have had to publicly respond to harassment claims. In October of 2015, a group of female officers with the Calgary police force spoke publicly about their problems. They said that they had experienced bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace. However, they felt they were not able to make a proper complaint, and that the force wasn't working hard enough to fix these problems. This created controversy within the police force. Some argued that these problems should be solved privately, not discussed publicly.

Pre-listening Questions

What are some responsibilities that police officers have?

What are some characteristics of a good police officer?

When you have a problem at your job, what do you do? Who do you talk to?

Vocabulary

Synonym Matching

To help you better understand the story, choose the pair of synonyms (words with similar meaning) that best match each of the vocabulary words. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| <u>Answer</u> | <u>Word from the story</u> | <u>Synonyms</u> |
|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| _____ | resigned (v.) | 1. explaining, telling |
| _____ | prepared (v.) | 2. abusing, intimidating (someone weaker) |
| _____ | detailed (v.) | 3. managed, taken care of |
| _____ | bullying (n.) | 4. ready, to be all set |
| _____ | harassment (n.) | 5. now, immediately |
| _____ | suffered (v.) | 6. explained, described |
| _____ | describing (v.) | 7. hurt, felt pain |
| _____ | dealt with (v.) | 8. quit, stepped down |
| _____ | right away (ph. adv.) | 9. review, reconsider |
| _____ | revisit (v.) | 10. repeated bothering, threatening behaviour |

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

commission – an official group with a particular responsibility (e.g., to control something)

‘fought back tears’ – tried not to cry

We encourage you to study these new words using this link: <https://quizlet.com/32ul1d>

You can practice online for free and as many times as you want to. The Quizlet app is a free vocabulary study tool. You can download it to your phone or tablet and practice new vocabulary whenever you have time.

Listening Activity

Multiple Choice

Read the following sentences. Then, listen to the audio and choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| A Calgary Police officer resigned from her position at a _____ Police commission meeting. | a) provincial b) public |
| Jen Magnus read a prepared _____ explaining her reasons. | a) story b) statement |
| Magnus has been with the CPS for _____ years. | a) fourteen b) forty |
| In her resignation, she detailed bullying and _____ harassment. | a) sensitive b) sexual |
| _____ Roger Chafin was at the meeting. | a) Police Chief b) Peace officer |
| He said it was _____ one of his members describing that kind of behaviour. | a) harmful to see b) hard to hear |
| He says this is the kind of _____ the CPS is working to change. | a) condition b) culture |
| Chafin also said he would prefer to _____ her resignation right away. | a) not accept b) not ask for |
| He says he would like to revisit the situation with Magnus at a _____. | a) longer meeting b) later date |

Food for thought

Do you think that the police workplace environment will change?

How can organizations prevent bullying? How can they prevent harassment?

What advice would you give a friend or relative who was being harassed at work?

Transcripts of Weekly news stories

| | FEBRUARY WEEKLY NEWS STORIES | TIME |
|--------------|--|------|
| Introduction | Hi, I'm Shannon Scott and this is Learning English with the CBC for January 23rd with stories that made news over the past week. | 0:00 |
| Story 1 | Canadians continue to mourn the shooting deaths of six men at a mosque in Quebec City late last month. 18 other people were wounded in the attack. Police say it happened during evening prayers, when a man opened fire inside the mosque. There is only one suspect in the shooting. Alexandre Bissonnette faces 11 charges: six for first degree murder, and five for attempted murder. Police continue to investigate to try and figure out the motive behind the attack. Several thousand people attended a public funeral for three of the victims in Montreal on Thursday. The other three men will have Muslim burials in Quebec City. Police departments across the country have increased patrols around mosques and other places of worship. Though the federal government has called the shooting a terrorist attack, the Minister of Public Safety says he will not be raising the national terror threat. It has been at medium since the attack on Parliament Hill in 2014. | 0:11 |
| Story 2 | Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government will no longer be looking to change the way Canadians vote before the next election. Electoral reform was one of Trudeau's most important campaign promises, which he also repeated in his government's first throne speech. Trudeau had said the 2015 election would be the last under the "first past the post" system Canadians currently use to elect a government. But last week, the new Minister of Democratic Institutions was given her instructions, and they do not include changing the electoral system. In the letter, the Prime Minister said that is because after talking with Canadians, there is no clear preference or agreement on what the new voting system should be. The opposition parties were quick to criticize the move, with the NDP calling Trudeau a liar, and the Conservatives saying "Canadians should think twice before believing what Justin Trudeau says." | 1:41 |
| Story 3 | A long-serving Calgary Police officer has resigned her position with the Service at a public Police commission meeting. Jen Magnus fought back tears as she read a prepared statement explaining her reasons for quitting. Magnus has been with the CPS for 14 years, and in her resignation, she detailed bullying and sexual harassment she says she has suffered on the job. Police Chief Roger Chafin was at the meeting. He says it was hard to hear one of his members describing the kinds of behavior Magnus says she dealt with. He says this is the kind of culture the CPS is working to change. Chafin also said he would prefer to not accept her resignation right away. Instead, he says, he would like to revisit the situation with Magnus at a later date. | 2:58 |

Answer keys

News story 1

Six people dead in Quebec mosque shooting (0:11)

Vocabulary

| <u>Answer</u> | <u>Vocabulary word</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|---------------|-------------------------|---|
| <u>e</u> | mourn (v.) | a) person who might have committed a crime |
| <u>i</u> | wounded (adj.) | b) the acts of walking through an area to make sure it's safe |
| <u>g</u> | prayers (n.) | c) to search for the truth |
| <u>a</u> | suspect (n.) | d) a ceremony to honour a dead person |
| <u>k</u> | charges (n.) | e) to feel strong sadness when someone dies |
| <u>c</u> | investigate (v.) | f) became larger in size or amount |
| <u>j</u> | motive (n.) | g) a religious practice of speaking to God |
| <u>d</u> | funeral (n.) | h) people affected by a crime |
| <u>h</u> | victims (n.) | i) injured by a weapon |
| <u>f</u> | increased (v.) | j) a reason for doing something |
| <u>b</u> | patrols (n.) | k) a police statement saying someone has committed crimes |

Listening

- a. 6 Police in Quebec continue to investigate, and police around Canada do more patrols.
- b. 3 A man, Alexandre Bissonnette, opened fire inside the mosque.
- c. 5 Thousands of people attended a public funeral in Montreal.
- d. 4 Six people died, and 18 others were wounded.
- e. 2 In a Quebec City mosque, people practiced evening prayers.
- f. 1 The national terror threat was set at medium because of the attack on Parliament Hill.

News story 2

Trudeau will no longer change electoral system (1:41)

Vocabulary

1. The journalist asked the question twice. After she repeated it, the mayor gave an answer.
2. Jack likes the Conservative candidate, and Drew's preference is the Liberal one. But, both are in agreement that the economy is the most important issue.
3. Mr. Smith talked a lot about education in his campaign to become premier of the province. He thinks that education reform is needed.
4. When he ran for president, Donald Trump would criticize groups of people, including Mexicans. Many people were surprised when he won the election.
5. To apply for that job, go to the government website and follow the instructions.

Listening

1. F Trudeau's government is now looking to change the way Canadians vote.
2. T Electoral reform was one of Trudeau's most important campaign promises.
3. T Trudeau talked about electoral reform in a throne speech.
4. F He said the 2016 election would be the last under the old system.
5. F Canadians want to switch to a "first past the post" system.
6. T The new Minister of Democratic Institutions will not change the electoral system.
7. F The Prime Minister said that he didn't talk to enough Canadians about it.
8. F He said Canadians have a clear preference on a new voting system.
9. T Opposition parties criticized Trudeau's decision.
10. F The Conservatives called Trudeau a liar.

News story 3**Calgary police officer resigns due to harassment (2:58)****Vocabulary**

| <u>Answer</u> | <u>Word from the story</u> | <u>Synonyms</u> |
|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| <u>8</u> | resigned (v.) | 1. explaining, telling |
| <u>4</u> | prepared (v.) | 2. abusing, intimidating (someone weaker) |
| <u>6</u> | detailed (v.) | 3. managed, taken care of |
| <u>2</u> | bullying (n.) | 4. ready, to be all set |
| <u>10</u> | harassment (n.) | 5. now, immediately |
| <u>7</u> | suffered (v.) | 6. explained, described |
| <u>1</u> | describing (v.) | 7. hurt, felt pain |
| <u>3</u> | dealt with (v.) | 8. quit, stepped down |
| <u>5</u> | right away (ph. adv.) | 9. review, reconsider |
| <u>9</u> | revisit (v.) | 10. repeated bothering, threatening behaviour |

Listening

| | |
|---|---|
| A Calgary Police officer resigned from her position at a _____ Police commission meeting. | a) provincial b) public |
| Jen Magnus read a prepared _____ explaining her reasons. | a) story b) statement |
| Magnus has been with the CPS for _____ years. | a) fourteen b) forty |
| In her resignation, she detailed bullying and _____ harassment. | a) sensitive b) sexual |
| _____ Roger Chafin was at the meeting. | a) Police Chief b) Peace officer |
| He said it was _____ one of his members describing that kind of behaviour. | a) harmful to see b) hard to hear |

| | |
|--|---|
| He says this is the kind of _____ the CPS is working to change. | a) condition b) culture |
| Chafin also said he would prefer to _____ her resignation right away. | a) not accept b) not ask for |
| He says he would like to revisit the situation with Magnus at a _____. | a) longer meeting b) later date |